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31,000 Struggle To Pay Electric Bills

Applications For Help Increase From 200 To 800

Reported By Larry Flowers

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- As some residents work to pay doubled and tripled electric bills, the Metro Action Commission is developing new ways to help struggling customers.

With the Tennessee Valley Authority's fuel cost adjustments and rate increases, nearly 31,000 Nashville Electric Service customers are struggling to pay their heating costs.

The commission said it is trying to work through applications from the needy as fast as possible in an attempt to speed up the approval process.

Some electric customers said they were told it would take four to six weeks to process applications for help.

The commission representatives said even though there has been a higher than usual demand for help, they didn't expect to run out of money.

On an average year, the commission helps around 5,900 people in a year, but they said they expect to help 10,000 this year.

The commission used to receive 200 applications a week, but that number has increased to 800 a week.

Reporter Larry Flowers is working on this story and will have a full report on Channel 4 News at 6 p.m.

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